2013 is a very special year for the Ain Dah Yung Center (ADYC) as we look to celebrate our 30th ANNIVERSARY! Twenty-nine years ago, the first American Indian school in St. Paul recognized that many of its students were homeless or in homes that were affecting their ability to attend school and succeed. Children and youth were often focused on surviving and meeting basic needs. Additionally, a majority of homeless children and youth were, and continue to be, today, American Indian. Out of these realities and through the hard work of many of the early Indian leaders and the generosity of funding partners, Ain Dah Yung was created in 1983.

Since then, the Ain Dah Yung Center has led the way as the first agency to provide any form of culturally focused services to any group. This Ain Dah Yung Center’s historical and culturally relevant programs immediately proved to be much more effective than mainstream services for American Indian families and that fact continues to be demonstrated today.

As ADYC grew, it became clear that the issues bringing youth to the shelter — abuse/neglect, drug and alcohol dependence, pregnancy, depression/suicide, trauma, etc. — needed to be addressed. Through the integration of traditional American Indian beliefs and an asset-based approach that builds on the strengths of the families, the original emergency shelter program was expanded to include several “wrap-around” services for youth and their families. These included the development of the Ninijanisag [Our Children] and Oyate Nawajin [Stand with the People] Programs as well as the Beverley A. Benjamin Youth Lodge, and our Street Outreach Program. Be sure to check out the program section of this Annual Report for full details of our current program initiatives.

In 2012, the Ain Dah Yung Center provided services to approximately 4,521 youth and families from the Twin Cities area and throughout the State, using traditional American Indian values as a starting point for personal and community growth. All of this and more was made possible through the generosity and wisdom of our elders who continued to teach the ways, through allies who understood the importance of culturally effective services, and community members and partners who stand alongside us with visions that lend to opportunities of wellness and triumph. It is with heartfelt appreciation that we look forward to 2013 with promise and invite you to not only continue this vital partnership, but join in various celebrations of our 30 Years of Commitment to providing families and children with choices that generate assurance and capacity to build on their strengths of culture and family.

It is an honor to have you walk with us…Thank You!

Chi Miiguwet, Valerie Larsen, Board of Directors – President

Deb Foster, Executive Director